Frequently Asked Questions

Name: Comprehensive Analyses of Multi-jurisdictional Use and Management of Water Resources on a Watershed or Regional Scale

The Energy and Water Development Appropriations Act, 2006 (PL 109-103) directed the Secretary to conduct at full federal expense comprehensive analyses that examine multi-jurisdictional use and management of water resources on a watershed or regional scale. Funds of $4.5 million were appropriated in the general expense account but actual funds of $4.45 million were available, as a result of an across the board one-percent reduction. The HQUSACE, along with the ASA(CW), developed guidance and selection criteria for the Request for Proposals (RFP) sent to the Major Subordinate Commands, to identify high potential watersheds that would provide opportunities to implement the provisions of the bill. In response to the RFP, 38 proposals were received totaling $28 million. Five studies from across the Nation were selected and the studies were underway in June 2006.

Q. What five studies were selected?

A. Five studies were selected from around the nation to illustrate the associated watershed problems within various geographic regions. The five studies underway are:

1. Great Lakes Habitat Protection and Restoration Implementation Plan – (funds of $1.12 Mil) – district completes 3rd qtr 08
2. Delaware River Basin, NY, PA, NJ and DE – (funds of $1.12 Mil)- district completes 3rd qtr 08
3. Comprehensive Water Resource Planning for the 17 Western States – (funds of $0.815 Mil) – district completes 3rd qtr 08
4. Middle Mississippi River Regional Corridor (funds of $0.715 Mil)- district completes 4th qtr 08
5. Virgin River and Tributaries – Utah, Arizona and Nevada (funds of $0.685 Mil) – district completes 2nd qtr 08

Q. What outcome do you expect from these studies?

A. It is intended that the study results clearly demonstrate that with minimal funding levels the Corps of Engineers can successfully bring together key stakeholders from government, private citizenry and interested groups in cooperative alliances to effectively identify the water resources needs in their region. In each of these five regions, the Corps of Engineers, in collaboration with their study teams, will establish a viable structure and process to continue watershed management initiatives that both sustain the environment and provide for reasonable economic growth to serve the good of the entire Nation.

Q. What are we learning about large scale water resource planning that we didn’t know before?

A. Existing cost-sharing requirements have resulted in narrowly focused planning studies with a single entity partner. Studies of the scope of the five underway have rarely been considered because of funding limitations and the extensive coordination to bring together such a diverse resource base. Broad scale, watershed studies require frequent and consistent communication with the partners, stakeholders and participating agencies, once the various interests have been identified. Without sufficient funding within their

organizations for these types of initiatives, some federal agencies are unable to participate fully. The broad scale, watershed based management framework provides opportunities to identify and reduce redundancy among the participating federal agencies through the collaboration and integration of on-going efforts that occurs.

Q. Who are the key participants (along with the Corps of Engineers) that are represented on the Project Delivery Teams?

A. The Great Lakes study includes over 15 federal, state and NGO partners, as well as members/observers of the Great Lakes Regional Collaboration that worked together to develop a strategy for eight priority issues identified by the Great Lakes Governors and Mayors.
One of the main objectives of the current watershed study is to integrate the individual Great Lake state efforts of planning, conservation or restoration of the coastal resources into a regional planning effort.

The key participant in the Delaware River Basin study is the Delaware River Basin Commission staff and Commissioners representing the States of New Jersey, New York, Delaware and the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. The primary goal of this study is to enhance multi-jurisdictional use and management of the water resources of the Delaware River Basin.

The primary partners for the Western States Watershed Study are the Western States Water Council (WSWC) and the Western Governor’s Association (WGA). The WGA acts as a center of innovation and promotes shared development of solutions to regional problems in the Western States. Key federal agencies include the USGS, EPA, NOAA, BuRec, and NRCS. The main goal of the Western States Watershed Study is to assist the WGA and WSWC in implementing several high priority recommendations of their 2006 report on Water Needs and Strategies for a Sustainable Future.

The key partnership of Middle Mississippi River Corridor study is the Middle Mississippi River Partnership, a multi-state, multi-jurisdictional collaboration of sixteen federal/state agencies and not-for-profit organizations. Two additional state agencies are considering joining the partnership – the Missouri Department of Natural Resources and the State of Illinois Environmental Protection Agency. The Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) in Missouri is a recent member. The goal of this multi-agency collaboration is to identify a regional strategy and implementable actions to restore and enhance the water resources of this 195-mile river corridor.

The Virgin River Watershed Study Technical Committee is composed of members representing local and state agencies in Utah, Nevada and Arizona, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Bureau of Land Management, the Kaibab Paiute Indian Tribe and a member from the Colorado River Commission in Nevada. NRCS and U.S. Geological Survey are expected to participate. The collaborative effort underway will produce a watershed plan to manage the water resources of the Virgin River watershed particularly around the top five issues identified by stakeholder participants: flood plain management; land use planning, invasive species, endangered species and water supply.